

CU's Hempen favors NCAA tourney change

New rule adds more early round host sites

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Posted: 06/18/2010 11:57:36 PM MDT

CU soccer coach Bill Hempen said he likes a rule change announced by the NCAA on Friday that calls for the first and second rounds of the Division I soccer tournament to be played on different weekends with the games being played on campus sites.

The current system has both rounds being played on one weekend at 16 sites around the country. It could give CU opportunities to host NCAA tournament games in the future.

Hempen said playing three games in five days in Big 12 conference tournament followed by the possibility of playing two NCAA tournament games with only four days rest between is "one of the most difficult things we could have to do."

But that won't be a problem any more when CU joins the Pac-10 because the league -- possibly the strongest in women's soccer in the nation -- does not have a conference championship game. That will help in years the Buffs do make the NCAA tournament.

"It's going to be great," Hempen said. "You're going to get a chance to really prepare as opposed to survive."

Hempen is not such a big fan of another recent change the NCAA made for women's soccer.

The governing body prohibited teams from flying to play exhibition games during the spring practice window. It was approved as a cost-cutting move, but it will make it difficult for Colorado to get work in against the same level of competition it will see in the fall in the Pac-10.

Hempen said there is an effort underway to get the new rule overturned.

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